Chapter 12

Strategic Antecedents of Emotional Involvement in Europe: Emotions at Work Context and Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT

The globalization of tourism is one of the most competitive industries in the world. The present chapter deals with a new paradigm in the management of human resources in organizations in the sector, focused on development and deep involvement in their practices. In particular it explores the construct of job involvement in its emotional dimension – emotional involvement in a sample of 1,628 European employees who work in the hotel and restaurant sector. Using a model of binary logistical regression, the result identifies the profile of the European employee involved emotionally with the activity that he/she carries out and reveals the main variables that the managers of human resources in this type of organization should act upon if they wish to increase the level of emotional involvement of their employees compared to other competitors in such a globalized sector.

1. BACKGROUND

In today’s working environment, the management of Human Resources represents the most important sustainable competitive advantage due to keeping employees enables the organization to be successful. Product innovations can be duplicated, but the synergy of a company’s workforce cannot be replaced. For this reason, it is not sufficient to merely attract talented employees; retaining them is imperative for DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0356-9.ch012
In this sense, the management of emotional well-being in the workplace is no longer a marginal aspect, but instead has become a key strategic and business management factor due to its ability to reorient organizations to further the fulfillment of their mission (Lucia-Casademunt, Ariza-Montes and Morales-Gutierrez, 2012). Its importance is evident in the fact that employees are viewed as one of the most important assets for most organizations, in particular service-based organizations, because of the benefits of delivering successful performances. And one of the most important service-based organizations is the Hospitality sector.

According to Brotherton (2002) the tourism industry includes companies providing food and beverages; accommodations; entertainment and transportation which are highly competitive and complex sectors, especially in hotel and the food and beverages service segments, both of which are very important for industry development. In this sector, a tendency of renewal and openness is emerging through the utilization of international chain hotels in brand strategy in order to engage the market created a more highly competitive tourism industry (Cheng, 2011).

Kusluvan et al. (2010) argue that few people would reject the proposition that the human element in tourism and hospitality organizations is critical for service quality, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. This is because, a key aspect that characterizes the Human Resource management in tourism and hospitality organizations is that its chief output are services, which are produced and consumed simultaneously, usually at the service providers’ location; and customers are present or participating in the service, usually with interpersonal interaction between customers and employees. So the latter become part of the product, represent the organization, and help to form the image of the organization (Hartline and Jones, 1996). In addition, such employees have their own particularities so that, Kusluvan et al. (2010) propose classification (from OECD, 2003; Nickson, Warhurst and Dutton (2010); International Labor Organization, 2001) which reflect the specificities of workforce and labor market and hamper the management of people from many other sectors, i.e., high-touch industry, high levels of labor turnover, unskilled and semiskilled nature of jobs, very heterogeneous labor market or poor conditions of employment and human resource management practices (unprofessional employee recruitment and selection; limited orientation and training, absence of employee empowerment and participation, “hierarchical, autocratic and harsh styles of supervisors and management), etc.

Priyanka (2011) argues that employees involved provide quality service. Therefore, job involvement plays a vital role in the hospitality sector because it effects everything from retention and productivity to profitability and safety. So, employees and how they are managed are key determinants of service quality and business success (Schneider, et al., 2003). Against this background job involvement arises as a key factor of competitiveness –the basis for transforming people into strategic resource for organizations in the 21st century- which impacts positively on the performance of individuals and business success (Pfeffer, 1994). Cohen (1999) agree that this construct stands as one of the most important work attitudes related to the operation of the organization, being perceived by individuals as reflecting the outcome of their everyday experiences at work. In this line, Walsh and Milner (2002) highlight three aspects in this regard: (1) It is an attitude strategically closely related to high performance organizations, (2) Its development is conditioned by the deployment of certain critical factors such as the investment in skills, internal communication, flexible work environment, equitable and openness reward systems, etc. and (3) it impacts highly in employees and employers. Furthermore, as Chin-Chih HO (2006), points out, listening to and understanding the views of employees and using this information to satisfy their needs are essential steps in reinforcing commitment in a workforce.
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